



STATELINE INTENSIVE WILDERNESS INVENTORY

FINAL DECISION

Bureau of Land Management



December 1981

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STATELINE
INTENSIVE WILDERNESS INVENTORY
FINAL DECISION

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
OREGON - IDAHO - NEVADA - UTAH
NOVEMBER 1981

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STATELINE INVENTORY

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has completed the inventory phase of the wilderness review of public lands in the Stateline area (where Idaho joins with Oregon, Nevada, and Utah).

The Stateline area inventory was not completed with the Statewide inventories for each state, due to appeals received in Idaho on all of the Idaho Stateline inventory units that were proposed for intensive inventory. Although the states adjoining Idaho released their proposed inventory decisions in the Spring of 1980, they have withheld their final decisions pending the analysis of public comments on this joint Statewide report. Comments received by the Oregon, Nevada, and Utah BLM offices during their 1980 90-day comment period on their proposed decisions were utilized to formulate the coordinated proposed decision released for public comment in April 1981.

During this latest comment period approximately 25 responses were received from individuals and a variety of organizations. The information provided on the wilderness characteristics of these areas, especially the presence or absence of naturalness and outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation, was of great help in formulating the final decisions.

After analyzing and evaluating the comments received, this final decision has been formulated on which areas do or do not contain wilderness characteristics. The three areas which do are identified as Wilderness Study Areas to be studied through the BLM planning system with recommendations reported to Congress as to whether or not the areas are suitable for designation as wilderness.

Sincere appreciation is extended to those who have participated in this endeavor.

This document contains narrative summaries for those Stateline Inventory lands that are in part located in Nevada.

November 20, 1981

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STATELINE
INTENSIVE INVENTORY FINAL DECISION

Unit		Acres			Page
Name	Number	Proposed As WSA	Not Proposed As WSA	Total	
Juniper Basin <u>1</u> /	ID-16-59		15,248	15,248	N/A
Little Owyhee River <u>1</u> /	ID-16-48c	24,677	2,140	26,817	N/A
Lookout Butte	OR-3-194A		65,640	65,640	N/A
	ID-16-48a		39,200	39,200	
	Unit Total		104,840	104,840	
Owyhee River Canyon	OR-3-195	195,400	21,280	216,680	N/A
	ID-16-48b	33,700		33,700	
	Unit Total	229,100	21,280	250,380	
Oregon Butte	OR-3-159		32,440	32,440	12
	NV-020-811		10,680	10,680	
	ID-16-70e		3,400	3,400	
	Unit Total		46,520	46,520	
Cottonwood-Salmon Falls	NV-010-179		10,276	10,276	17
	ID-17-26		5,977	5,977	
	Unit Total		16,253	16,253	
Upper Little Owyhee River	NV-010-102		53,384	53,384	25
	ID-16-56a		4,309	4,309	
	Unit Total		57,693	57,693	
Jarbridge Addition <u>1</u> /	ID-17-21		5,881	5,881	30
Upper Bruneau River <u>1</u> /	ID-17-19		21,711	21,711	35
South Fork Owyhee River	ID-16-53	42,510	5,550	48,060	41
	NV-010-103A	7,842	3,500	11,342	
	NV-010-103		9,319	9,319	
	Unit Total	50,352	18,369	68,721	
Little Goose Creek	NV-010-164		8,276	8,276	48
	ID-22-1		2,325	2,325	
	UT-020-001		1,330	1,330	
	Unit Total		11,931	11,931	
TOTALS		304,129	321,866	625,995	

1/ This unit is administered entirely by Idaho BLM.

STATE-BY-STATE SUMMARY

	Total	WSA	Acres		
	Units	Units	WSA	Not WSA	Total
Oregon	3	1	195,400	119,360	314,760
Idaho	11	3	100,887	105,741	206,628
Nevada	5	1	7,842	95,443	103,285
Utah	<u>1</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,330</u>	<u>1,330</u>
Total	11*	3*	304,129	321,874	626,003

*Since most units are partially in two or three of the states, this figure is not a sum of the above.

INTRODUCTION

Contained within this report are the Bureau of Land Management's final decisions on those BLM-administered lands in the Stateline area (where Idaho, Oregon, Nevada, and Utah meet), which qualify as Wilderness Study Areas (WSA's) and those which do not. Note that BLM is not at this time recommending that these areas should or should not be designated wilderness by Congress. BLM has determined that three inventory units contain wilderness characteristics as defined by the Wilderness Act of 1964 and that the others do not. The areas that meet these characteristics are proposed as WSA's and will be later studied to determine whether or not they are suitable for wilderness. Every WSA will be reviewed and acted upon by Congress after the studies are complete, whether the BLM deems them suitable for designation as wilderness or not.

These final decisions are the result of intensive inventory field work and analysis of public comment. Procedures for evaluating wilderness characteristics are noted in the BLM Wilderness Inventory Handbook, September 1978, and in Organic Act Directive 78-61, including changes 1, 2, and 3, and Instruction Memo No. 80-236.

The narratives included here are summaries of more detailed intensive inventory reports available in the BLM district offices. These summaries present a brief, overall picture of the intensive inventory decisions. For more detailed, site specific information, refer to the district files. More detailed maps and photographs are also contained in these files.

OVERVIEW OF BLM'S WILDERNESS REVIEW PROCESS

The BLM's wilderness review process is being completed in three phases--Inventory, Study, and Reporting.

Phase I - Inventory: The inventory phase has two parts, initial and intensive. Its overall purpose is to identify those public lands having wilderness characteristics as defined by the Wilderness Act of 1964.

In the Initial Inventory stage, public lands administered by the BLM which clearly and obviously did not have wilderness characteristics were identified. Existing information, such as maps and aerial photos, along with input received from the public, were utilized to make this decision. Three criteria had to be met for an area to be recommended for intensive inventory. Each area must be: (1) at least 5,000 acres in size or contiguous to a proposed or existing wilderness area, (2) roadless, and (3) substantially free of man's imprints.

In the Intensive Inventory stage, as reflected in this report, field surveys were conducted. Each area was examined to determine the presence or absence of wilderness characteristics listed in the Wilderness Act: size, naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation, and supplemental values. For an area to qualify as a Wilderness Study Area, it

must meet the size criteria, must be substantially natural and have either outstanding opportunities for solitude or outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

Phase II - Study: The study phase of the wilderness review will be completed as a part of the regional comprehensive land-use plans. During each planning effort, the public will have several opportunities to comment on all resource values within a Wilderness Study Area. These comments will be considered prior to the BLM's recommendations to the President and Congress on an area's suitability or unsuitability as wilderness. This phase will begin soon.

Phase III - Reporting: Recommendations on an area's suitability or unsuitability for wilderness designation will be reported to Congress through the Secretary of the Interior and the President. Reports on all WSA's must be submitted to the President by September 21, 1991.

DEFINITIONS

Terminology specific to the BLM Wilderness Review has evolved throughout the inventory process. To facilitate better communication, the following terms elaborate on definitions already given in the Wilderness Inventory Handbook and other guidance.

Contiguous Lands: Lands or legal subdivisions having a common boundary. Lands having only a common corner are not contiguous.

FLPMA: Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, which mandated the BLM Wilderness Review. Often referred to and pronounced "FLIPMA."

Inventory Unit: An area of public land indexed for easy reference at the start of the wilderness inventory. An official file for each unit is maintained at the BLM district office and is available for public review.

Non-Public Land Inholdings: All non-Federal lands, including state or private land located within the inventory units. These lands are not calculated in the acreage being evaluated nor are they being inventoried for wilderness characteristics.

Road: For the purposes of the BLM's wilderness inventory, the following definition applies: "The word 'roadless' refers to the absence of roads which have been improved and maintained by mechanical means to insure relatively regular and continuous use. A way maintained solely by the passage of vehicles does not constitute a road."

To clarify this definition, the following sub-definitions also apply:

"Improved and maintained" - Actions taken physically by man to keep the road open to vehicular traffic.
'Improved' does not necessarily mean formal construction.
'Maintained' does not necessarily mean annual maintenance.

"Mechanical means" - Use of hand or power machinery or tools.

"Relatively regular and continuous use" - Vehicular use which has occurred and will continue to occur on a relatively regular basis. Examples are: access roads for equipment to maintain a stock water tank or other established water sources; access roads to maintained recreation sites or facilities; or access roads to mining claims.

Roadless: Refers to the absence of roads which have been improved and maintained by mechanical means to insure relatively regular and continuous use.

Roadless Area: A roadless area is defined as a contiguous unit of land (irregardless of size or configuration) which lies between two or more roads and/or non-BLM lands. The key word in this definition is "contiguous." The word contiguous means being of the same boundary. Unless an inventory unit is completely dissected by the discovery of additional roads that result in the identification of two or more new roadless units under 5,000 acres, the original unit meets the definition of a contiguous roadless area.

Solitude: Outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation are wilderness characteristics examined in the intensive wilderness inventory. Factors contributing to opportunities for solitude are size, vegetative screening, topographic relief, vistas, and physiographic variety.

Supplemental Values: Ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value that may be present in an inventory unit. These are not necessary criteria for wilderness characteristics, as is stated in the Wilderness Act of 1964, but must be assessed during the intensive wilderness inventory.

Way: A two-wheel track created only by the passage of vehicles. A "way" is not a road.

Wilderness: The definition contained in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964 is as follows: "A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. Wilderness is an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Wilderness Area: An area formally designated by Congress as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Wilderness Characteristics: Those characteristics of wilderness as described in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act. These include size, naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined type of recreation, and supplemental values.

Wilderness Inventory: An evaluation of the public lands in the form of a written description and a map showing those lands that meet the wilderness criteria as established under Section 603(a) of FLPMA and Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act. The lands meeting the criteria will be referred to as Wilderness Study Areas (WSA's). Those lands identified as not meeting wilderness criteria will be released from further wilderness consideration.

Wilderness Review: The term used to cover the inventory, study, and reporting phases of the wilderness program of the BLM.

Wilderness Study Area (WSA): A Wilderness Study Area is a contiguous roadless area over 5,000 acres in size (or of sufficient size) within which can be found apparent naturalness and outstanding opportunities for solitude or for primitive and unconfined recreation. A WSA is merely the identification of the physical limits of the wilderness resource. No attempt is made to determine the value of the wilderness resource compared to other resource values. Because a WSA is partially defined as a roadless area, WSA boundaries may be along roads unless the inventory of the roadless unit shows a reason for adjusting away from the road due to a lack of naturalness or a clear and obvious lack of outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation.

HOW WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS WERE EVALUATED

Size

" . . . has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition . . . "

- Wilderness Act of 1964

The size criteria can be satisfied for inventory units in the following situations:

- a. Roadless areas with over 5,000 acres of contiguous public lands.
- b. Any roadless island of the public lands of less than 5,000 acres.
- c. Roadless areas of less than 5,000 acres of contiguous public lands where any one of the following apply:
 - They are contiguous with lands managed by another agency which have been formally determined to have wilderness or potential wilderness values.

- The public has indicated strong support for study of a particular area of less than 5,000 acres and it is demonstrated that it is clearly and obviously of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition, and of a size suitable for wilderness management.
- They are contiguous with an area of less than 5,000 acres of other Federal lands administered by an agency with authority to study and preserve wilderness lands, and the combined total is 5,000 acres or more.

Naturalness

" . . . generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable . . ."

- Wilderness Act of 1964

This criteria states that areas must appear to be primeval and untrammelled by man with man's developments permissible, yet substantially unnoticeable on the landscape. Acceptable imprints include fences, reservoirs, spring developments, constructed trails, bridges, fire towers, fire breaks, fire suppression facilities, pit toilets, fishery enhancement facilities, snow gauges, water quantity and quality measuring devices, and other scientific devices.

The presence of these human developments cannot be used to declare an inventory unit unnatural. Only when these developments are of such a number and distribution throughout a unit, or portion of the unit, that they become substantially noticeable to a casual observer can they be used to declare an entire unit or portion of the unit unnatural.

Imprints of man outside a unit are not normally considered in assessing the area's naturalness.

Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

" . . . has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation . . ."

- Wilderness Act of 1964

Two key words appear here: "or" and "outstanding." Either opportunities for solitude or opportunities for primitive recreation must be present for an area to qualify as a WSA; both need not be present. These opportunities must be outstanding in order for an area to qualify as a WSA. Opportunities for either solitude or primitive recreation may exist in an inventory unit, but if these opportunities are not outstanding, the area does not qualify as a WSA.

The evaluation of opportunities for solitude during the inventory is based upon the ability of a unit of a given size, topographic relief and vegetative

type to allow a visitor group to escape the sights and sounds of others within the unit as well as external influences (such as vehicle traffic on boundary roads or significant agricultural development and activity immediately adjacent to the unit.)

The evaluation of opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation is based on a unit's size and ability to provide exceptional or unusual natural features and recreation attractions. Exceptional natural features are those topographic and vegetative features which provide exceptional scenery, create a diversity of landforms and/or enable a visitor to achieve reasonable mobility within a unit, and would result in a strong recreation attraction to a unit for one or more types of activities.

Examples of primitive and unconfined types of recreation are: hiking, backpacking, fishing, hunting, spelunking, horseback riding, mountain or rock climbing, river running, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, dog sledding, photography, bird watching, canoeing, kayaking, sailing, and sightseeing for botanical, zoological, or geological features. These opportunities include potential as well as present use.

Supplemental Values

" . . . ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value."

- Wilderness Act of 1964

The presence or lack of supplemental values, such as ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical importance will not determine whether an inventory unit becomes a WSA. These values are not essential for WSA status; however, it is important that the presence or absence of these types of features in an area be noted.

INTERIM MANAGEMENT POLICY (IMP)

During the period of the wilderness review and until Congress acts on the President's recommendations on which areas are suitable for wilderness designation, the Secretary of the Interior is required to manage lands having wilderness characteristics so as not to impair their suitability for preservation as wilderness, subject to certain exceptions and conditions. This management is referred to as "interim management" and is discussed in a BLM document entitled Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review, December 1979. This is available at any BLM office.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A 90-day public comment period on the Stateline intensive inventory began on April 8, 1981, and ended on July 7, 1981. Seven open houses/workshops were held for the purpose of exchanging information with the public.

Comments on wilderness characteristics were utilized in the intensive inventory decision. General statements on characteristics as well as opinions for or against wilderness will be retained for use later in the study phase.

One comment specific to wilderness characteristics that offered the BLM new information or that shed new light on an issue could have changed the decision on an inventory unit. Conversely, large numbers of comments opposing or supporting study area designation without reference to the presence or absence of wilderness characteristics, had little or no effect on the final decision.

Information concerning other resource values and potential resource conflicts in the inventory units will not be considered until the study phase of the wilderness review. The intent of the public comment period was to gather ideas on the adequacy of the inventory data and the correctness of the recommendations.

Documents and maps describing the final decision are being sent to those indicating an interest in the wilderness program.

The three areas identified as Wilderness Study Areas will be further analyzed through the Bureau's planning process to determine if the areas should receive suitable or non-suitable recommendations for wilderness designation. These recommendations will eventually be forwarded to Congress for the final decision on possible designation of the areas into the National Wilderness Preservation System.

PROTEST AND APPEAL PROCEDURES

The final intensive inventory decision for each inventory unit is considered individually and separately from the decision for every other inventory unit. These decisions will be subject to a 30-day protest period which begins December 18, 1981. The decisions will become final January 18, 1982, unless timely protests are received by the BLM State Directors.

Persons wishing to protest any of these decisions must file a written protest with BLM State Directors (addresses below) by the close of business January 18, 1982. Only those protests received by the State Directors by the time and date specified will be accepted.

Idaho BLM State Director
Box 042, Federal Building
550 W. Fort Street
Boise, Idaho 83724

Oregon BLM State Director
P. O. Box 2965
Portland, Oregon 97208

Nevada BLM State Director
P. O. Box 12000
Reno, Nevada 98520

Utah BLM State Director
University Club Building
136 East South Temple
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111

The protest must specify the inventory unit(s) to which it is directed. It must include a clear and concise statement of the reasons for the protest, as well as data to support the reasons stated.

At the conclusion of the protest period, a notice of those decisions that were not protested and therefore have become final, and those decisions which are under formal protest will be published in the Federal Register. The notice will announce that the decision on the units under protest will not become final pending a decision on the protest and any resulting appeal.

A written decision will be issued on any protest which is filed according to the above requirements with a notice published in the Federal Register of the action taken in response to the protest.

Any person adversely affected by the decision on a written protest, may appeal such decision under the provisions of 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 4.

APPENDIX
NARRATIVE SUMMARIES

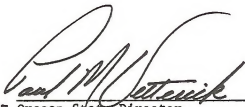



OREGON - NEVADA - IDAHO

The following unit contains BLM lands in Oregon, Nevada, and Idaho, and is lacking in wilderness characteristics:

Oregon Butte

OR-3-159
NV-020-811
ID-16-70e


ASSOCIATE Oregon State Director


Nevada State Director


Idaho State Director

OREGON BUTTE
OR-3-159
NV-020-811
ID-16-70e

The April 1981 proposed decision included the following evaluation of wilderness characteristics.

SIZE AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:

The unit contains a total of 46,520 acres of BLM land with 32,440 acres in Oregon, 10,680 acres in Nevada, and 3,400 acres in Idaho. Differences in these figures and those used previously, are due to more accurate acreage calculations. The Nevada portion of the unit was previously called Tent Creek.

In Oregon, during the intensive inventory, the former boundary between units OR-3-187 and OR-3-159 was determined not to be a road, resulting in a combination of the two areas. The acreage listed above as BLM acreage includes 2,200 acres Oregon BLM is in the process of acquiring from the State of Oregon. In Nevada there are 400 acres of private land inholdings.

The unit is bounded entirely by roads except for a small area in the southwest where it is bounded by private lands. Topography within the unit is flat to gently rolling tablelands. Oregon and Mahogany Buttes, and Tent and Mahogany Creeks provide the only noticeable diversity of relief. Vegetation consists of sagebrush and native grasses.

NATURALNESS:

The unit contains one reservoir, approximately eight miles of ways, 19 miles of bladed fence lines and three miles of bladed Oregon-Idaho stateline. The bladed Oregon-Idaho border is rehabilitating itself by natural processes.

All of these imprints of man are substantially unnoticeable in the unit as a whole, because the sagebrush screens them on the flat terrain. The unit appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature.

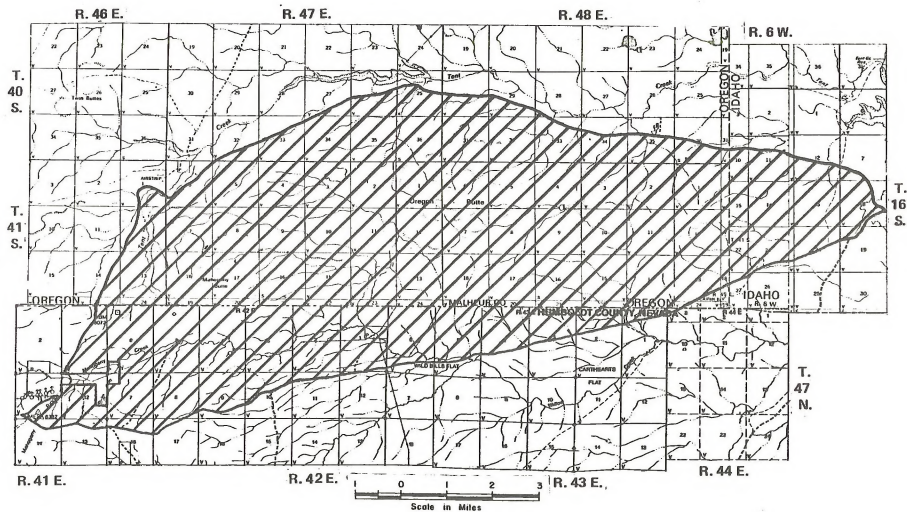
SOLITUDE:

The majority of the unit consists of a flat, open sagebrush plateau. The two buttes in Oregon, and Tent and Mahogany Creeks on the far western side, provide the only variation in relief. The two creeks provide only limited locations for seclusion.



The unit's size provides some opportunities for solitude, however, the elongated shape (the maximum distance from the perimeter to the core is 2 1/2 miles) makes it difficult to avoid the presence of others.

Due to the absence of vegetative screening and topographic diversity, the unit does not provide outstanding opportunities for solitude.

OREGON BUTTE
OR-3-159
NV-020-811
ID-16-70e



LEGEND

-  WILDERNESS STUDY AREA
-  AREA WITHOUT CHARACTERISTICS

PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED RECREATION:

The inventory determined that the unit lacks exceptional scenery and a diversity of landforms that would attract recreation users. The open, flat sagebrush terrain provides limited scenic quality. Backpacking across the unit would be a monotonous experience.

The narrow configuration of the unit would force primitive recreation users to be confined in a narrow corridor at the center of the unit, or in the creek drainages, in order to avoid external influences or boundary roads.

Because of the unit's narrow configuration, in combination with the lack of scenic features, the opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation are not outstanding.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES:

The unit contains no known supplemental values.

* * *

PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY:

Comments received were about equally divided among those who agreed with the proposed decision, those who disagreed, and those offering no opinion. One-half of the comments contained information on wilderness characteristics.

Comments that agreed with the proposed decision indicated that scenery in the area was common.

Comments that disagreed stated the following:

- The BLM should not have used the word "and" in the description of the lack of outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation; "or" should have been used, not "and."
- "Absence of vegetative screening and topographic diversity" should not have been used to determine that the unit lacked outstanding solitude.
- The Wilderness Act does not demand the opportunity to hide; it requires solitude, the opportunity to be alone. Any remote area offers this, including this unit.
- Narrow configuration cannot be used unit-wide to disqualify a unit, only for narrow fingers which extend from the main body of the unit.
- Tent and Mahogany Creek watersheds and the rolling hills and shallow drainages provide numerous isolated spots to avoid others.
- No limitation on direction of travel, ease of travel, and good mobility in the unit.

- Narrow configuration and lack of scenic features are improper analysis factors for outstanding recreation.

COMMENT ANALYSIS:

In the BLM recommendation it was stated, "... lack of outstanding opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined recreation." "And" was used in this sentence as a summation of the statements in earlier sections on solitude and recreation. In those sections, it was clearly stated that neither opportunity exists in the unit. Therefore, "and" is not incorrect wording in the summation paragraph.

"... absence of vegetative screening and topographic diversity" was used in the description of the lack of solitude, as one of the factors considered in the solitude evaluation. Other factors that are evaluated to determine solitude--size, configuration, access points and travel corridors; and the ability of visitors to avoid others in the unit--were also used.

Remoteness alone does not guarantee outstanding opportunities for solitude, however, the insufficient vegetative screening and topographic relief can contribute to a lack of outstanding opportunities. Visitors would have difficulty being alone.

Narrow configuration has been used by the BLM in the inventory in relation to narrow fingers of land that stick out from the main body of a unit. However, configuration is also a factor analyzed in the solitude determination. In this elongated unit, with a maximum of $2\frac{1}{2}$ - 3 miles from the edge of the unit to the center, it would be difficult for visitors to avoid the presence of others, therefore, the narrow configuration is one of the important factors in determining the lack of outstanding opportunities for solitude.

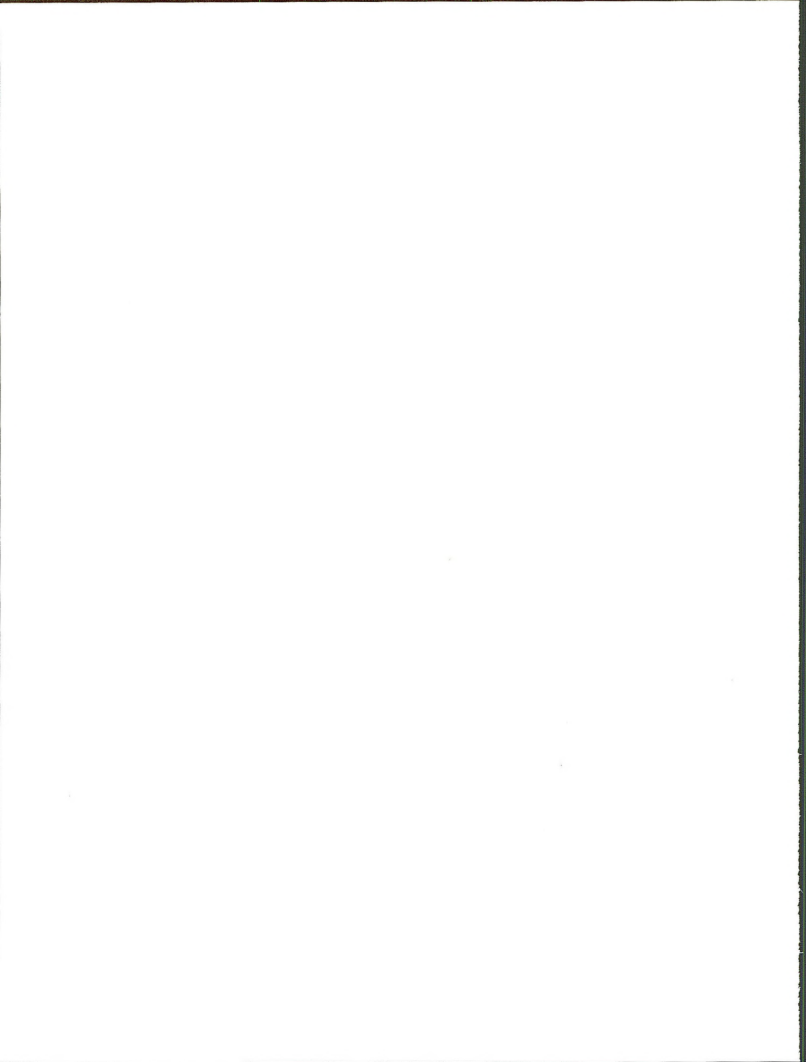
The limited number of drainages and the low rolling hills in the unit contribute to the ease of travel and good mobility in the unit. Coupled with the size and configuration of the unit this makes it difficult for visitors to avoid others in the unit.

The physical attributes of a unit which can contribute to an outstanding opportunity for primitive recreation include size and configuration, a diversity of landform, a variety of scenic features, the ability to utilize the entire area, and the ability to enjoy supplemental values. In this unit a number of recreation activities can be pursued, however, the narrow configuration of the unit, coupled with the lack of physical features that would be a strong attraction for recreationists, in combination with the lack of scenic features, all contribute to the conclusion that the recreation opportunities within the unit are not outstanding.

* * *

DECISION:

No new information was received through public comments that would warrant a change in the decision. Although the unit retains a natural appearance, it does not qualify as a WSA, due to a lack of outstanding opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined recreation.



IDAHO - NEVADA

The following units contain BLM lands in Idaho and Nevada:

Lacking In Wilderness Characteristics


Cottonwood-Salmon Falls	NV-010-179 ID-17-26
Upper Little Owyhee River	NV-010-102 ID-16-56a
Jarbridge Addition*	ID-17-21
Upper Bruneau River*	ID-17-19


Wilderness Study Area

South Fork Owyhee River**	ID-16-53 NV-010-103A
---------------------------	-------------------------

* This unit is administered entirely by Idaho BLM.

** Portions of this unit and all of adjacent unit NV-010-103 are lacking in wilderness characteristics.


Idaho State Director


Nevada State Director

COTTONWOOD-SALMON FALLS
NV-010-179
ID-17-26

The April 1981 proposed decision included the following evaluation of wilderness characteristics.

SIZE AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:

The unit contains a total of 17,767 acres of BLM land; 11,790 acres in Nevada, and 5,977 acres in Idaho. The unit is located about three miles northwest of Jackpot, Nevada, and contains flat to rolling terrain except for the canyons of Cottonwood Creek and Salmon Falls Creek. In these drainages the canyon walls fall off sharply to the perennial creeks which total about 20 miles. Four short cherry-stem roads penetrate into the eastern and western boundaries of the unit in Idaho. One 900-acre parcel in the south is separated by a road and does not meet the size criterion.

NATURALNESS:

One parcel in the southeast portion, containing 1,700 acres is unnatural due to a crested wheatgrass seeding and a three-mile long pipeline.

In addition to the cherry-stem roads mentioned earlier, several ways penetrate to the rim across the eastern plateau in Idaho. Several drift fences and a Stateline fence are within the unit. West of Salmon Falls Creek the imprints of man are so few and so widely scattered that they are substantially unnoticeable.

East of Salmon Falls Creek, man's imprints, in combination with the overwhelming visual presence of adjacent boundary powerlines, render the northeastern portion of the unit unnatural. These same powerlines can also be viewed from much of the northwestern plateau area, due to the sloping terrain.

South of the Stateline boundary fence, the few imprints of man are separated by large distances and are substantially unnoticeable. Therefore, the Nevada portion of the unit as well as the land within the canyons retains an essentially natural appearance.

SOLITUDE:

The unit contains two types of topographic regions--the meandering canyon of Salmon Falls Creek and its tributary, Cottonwood Creek; and the gently rolling plateau region dissected by the canyon.

The canyons are typified by broad, heavily vegetated riparian bottomland, confined by sheer walls or moderate to steep talus slopes. Vegetation in the riparian area consists of large, dense stands of willow and grassy meadows. Vegetation on the slopes consists of sagebrush and grasses. The plateau has gently rolling hills with elevation differences of 100 feet or less which form shallow drainages emptying into the canyons.

The canyon of Salmon Falls Creek, and to a lesser extent Cottonwood Creek, would concentrate visitors into a narrow corridor and increase the potential for visitor contact. The meandering character of the canyons, in combination with tall dense riparian vegetation, provides screening between visitors using the canyons. However, because of the short length of canyon within the unit, visitor interaction could be high.

The plateau, with limited topographic relief and vegetation, fails to screen substantial external influences (powerlines, trains, vehicle traffic) from view over much of the unit and renders the opportunities for solitude less than outstanding.

Because of the strong corridor effect of the canyon, the limited size and screening provided by the plateau, and the presence of significant external influences, opportunities for solitude are not outstanding.

PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED RECREATION:

Possible recreation activities include hunting, sightseeing, photography, canoeing, rafting, hiking, and camping. Hunting is available for deer and chukar. Sightseeing and photography subjects are high in the unit. Canoeing and rafting opportunities are moderate. Hiking and camping along the drainages is good.

The canyons of Salmon Falls Creek and Cottonwood Creek are considered scenic due largely to the water courses and riparian vegetation set against the talus slopes and sheer walls. These canyons offer a variety in form, color, and texture. The gentle to moderate terrain over much of the unit offers easy mobility throughout the entire unit, particularly into and out of the canyons. However, due to the lack of any major scenic features or attractions outside the canyon, and the significant impact of external influences over large areas of the plateau, recreation opportunities outside the canyon are very limited.

Despite the presence of scenic natural features and the recreation attractions of the canyons, opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation are not outstanding because of the need to remain confined to a short canyon to enjoy a recreation experience in a natural landscape.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES:

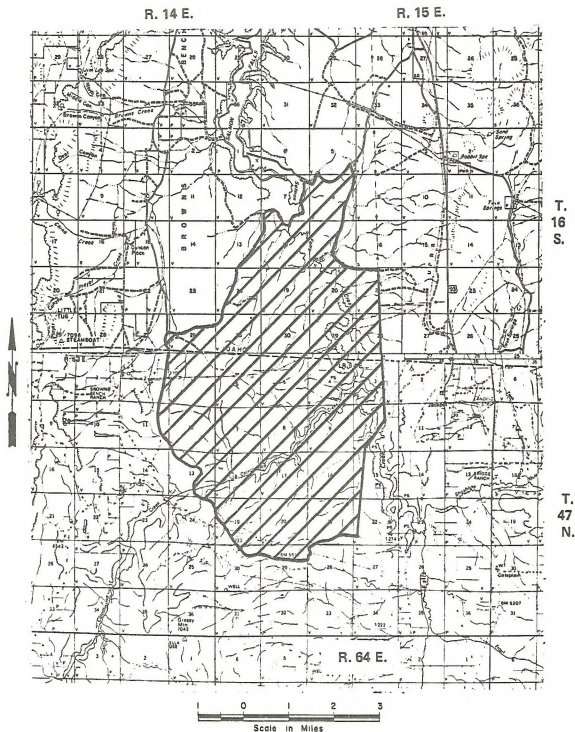
The unit's supplemental values include wildlife, scenic, ecological, and archaeological values. The habitats of five sensitive species (western burrowing owl, ferruginous hawk, long-billed curlew, bobcat, and spotted bat), and one endangered species (bald eagle) are found within the unit as well as winter range for antelope and mule deer. Prehistoric cultural values and scenic values associated with the canyons are considered significant.

* * *



Through more accurate methods of measurement, the total acreage of this unit was determined to be 16,253 acres with 10,276 acres in Nevada, and 5,977 acres in Idaho.

* * *

COTTONWOOD-SALMON FALLS
NV-010-179
ID-17-26



LEGEND

-  WILDERNESS STUDY AREA
-  AREA WITHOUT CHARACTERISTICS

PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY:

Half of the comments received disagreed with the proposed decision. Of the remaining comments, most agreed with the proposed decision, with several offering no opinion. Most of the comments received provided information on wilderness characteristics.

Comments that agreed with the proposed decision stated the following:

- The unit's east side in Idaho is unnatural in character; the canyon and lands to the west are natural.
- Agree on the exclusion of the 1,700 acre and 900-acre parcels.
- The 1,700 acres are unnatural due to the seeding and water pipeline.
- Scenery in the unit is common.
- The unit lacks outstanding solitude and recreation; wilderness characteristics are lacking.

Comments that disagreed with the proposed decision stated:

- Ways do not affect apparent naturalness; they should not be a factor of naturalness.
- Disagree that the powerlines are overwhelming; they don't create a sense of unnaturalness on the plateau.
- From the southeastern plateau, the powerlines are not the dominant feature, the canyon is.
- Powerlines on the east do not affect the canyon bottoms or western rims; they can be ignored.
- Reflections of powerlines to the east are entirely outside the unit and don't affect the wilderness quality of the unit.
- External influences are not factors of solitude and must be restricted to the question of naturalness.
- Topographic variation, the meandering nature of the creek, and vegetation combine to create outstanding solitude.
- Thick growth in the canyons and their sinuousness provide excellent screening.
- Twenty miles of canyon with heavily vegetated riparian bottom assures outstanding solitude.
- The corridor effect evaluation is improper for solitude. The canyon offers length, numerous bends, heavy vegetation, and opportunities outside the canyon.

- The rolling hills and shallow drainages outside the canyon enhance the opportunities.
- The plateau is gently rolling country, other people fade into the landscape.
- The Wilderness Act does not demand the opportunity to hide; it requires solitude, the opportunity to be alone. Any remote area offers this, including this unit.
- The recreation opportunity is outstanding, due to diversity (8 activities) and to outstanding hunting, sightseeing, and photography.
- The creek offers excellent canoeing and rafting along 13 miles for six months of the year.
- Swimming and wading are excellent; fishing is not of the highest quality, but could be re-established.
- Wildlife species are numerous; hunting opportunities would be outstanding.
- Photography, scenery, camping, and wild flowers also contribute to the wilderness experience.
- The canyon offers exceptional scenery and variety.
- The BLM stated a lack of major scenic features outside the canyon, which wrongly requires that opportunities must exist in the unit as a whole, rather than somewhere in the unit.
- Scenery, as a supplemental value, is an improper criteria for evaluating recreation opportunities.
- It's improper to make an assumption on the amount of use the canyon would receive, and use this to determine characteristics. The willow in the canyon can absorb a large number of visitors.
- The BLM neglected seasonal variation and the impact this has on accessibility, in relation to solitude and recreation.
- The wording in the proposed decision stated "lacks outstanding opportunities for solitude and for primitive recreation." "Or" should have been used, not "and." Use of "limited size and screening provided by the plateau" was improper for the solitude evaluation.
- Five sensitive or endangered species and significant archaeological sites should qualify the unit as wilderness.

COMMENT ANALYSIS:

Comments stated that ways should not be a factor in the analysis of naturalness. Ways, as imprints of man on the naturalness of a unit, are definitely a

consideration under the naturalness criteria. Ways do not automatically disqualify an area. Their number, length, appearance, concentration, and cumulative effect along with other imprints of man may cause an exclusion of acreage.

A number of comments stated that the powerlines on the east side of the unit did not effect the wilderness quality of the unit. The BLM does not agree with this conclusion.

The overriding influence upon the naturalness, solitude and primitive recreation in this unit evolves around the visual impact from the powerlines along the eastern boundary. These metal and wooden powerlines are visible throughout the entire plateau and the entire length of Cottonwood Creek Canyon and in portions of Salmon Falls Creek Canyon (particularly on the western slopes within the canyon). The visual presence of the powerlines is inescapable except in the immediate canyon bottoms of Salmon Falls Creek and along the eastern slopes of the canyon. The total area within the unit where powerlines are not visible is less than 3,000 acres. The powerlines represent an inescapable presence of civilization which diminishes naturalness, and the opportunities for solitude and for primitive recreation.

The BLM wilderness inventory criteria does not indicate that outside influences are to be evaluated only under naturalness. Inventory guidelines discuss imprints of man outside the unit as a separate category, not tied to naturalness or solitude. The guidelines also state that if the outside influence is adjacent to the unit and is so extremely imposing that it cannot be ignored, the unit or portion of the unit may be disqualified. As stated above, the BLM feels the powerlines have this effect on the unit.

Several comments pointed out that the canyons provided outstanding opportunities for solitude or for primitive and unconfined recreation.

The BLM concurs that the canyons of Salmon Falls Creek and Cottonwood Creek are sufficiently long enough and readily escapeable to somewhat negate the corridor effect of visitors concentrating within the canyons.

However, as pointed out in an earlier paragraph, only a very small area remains free of the outside influences of the powerlines. Regardless of the fact that some opportunities for solitude exist, they are not considered to be outstanding due to the small area involved.

Salmon Falls Creek also offers a wide diversity of recreational activities some of which are unusual for the area (canoeing). However, to enjoy recreational opportunities in a natural landscape and to enjoy isolation from the influences of man, visitors must confine themselves to a very small, narrow corridor of use along the riparian areas and eastern slopes of Salmon Falls Creek. Any area which provides recreational activities that must be confined to so small an area in order to enjoy a natural landscape cannot be considered to have outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Likewise, any area which provides opportunities for visitors to escape man's influences only in such a small, short confining canyon area cannot have outstanding opportunities.

A primitive recreational experience must provide an opportunity for finding isolation, a vastness of scale, a feeling of being a part of a natural environment, a high degree of challenge or risk and a chance to use outdoor skills. The recreational activities possible in this unit cannot provide these opportunities because of the widespread powerline influences.

A diversity of recreation opportunities does not make the opportunities outstanding. The BLM inventory procedures indicate that an outstanding determination may be made based on the outstanding quality of one opportunity or through the diversity in the number of activities possible in the unit. It does not state that diversity automatically means outstanding.

The BLM has rated canoeing and rafting in the unit as moderate, as opposed to excellent as expressed in the comments.

Opportunities for outstanding recreation would not be required to be present in the entire unit, as correctly stated in the comments. However, the proposed decision report did not state that opportunities were outstanding in any portion of the unit, but pointed out areas where opportunities were present.

Determination of outstanding recreation opportunities is a subjective determination. Scenery, as it contributes to the participation in specific recreation activities, is an appropriate factor in determining if the opportunities are outstanding.

The proposed decision did not make any estimates on the amount of use the canyon may receive. It was pointed out that because of the short length of canyon within the unit it would be difficult for any number of visitors to avoid contacts with each other.

Seasonal variation was considered in the evaluation of outstanding solitude and recreation opportunities.

The wording in the proposed decision stated . . . "lacks outstanding opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined recreation." "And" was used in this sentence as a summation of the two earlier sections on solitude and recreation. In those sections, it was clearly stated that neither opportunity exists in the unit. Therefore, "and" is not incorrect wording in the summation paragraph.

The presence of supplemental values cannot qualify the unit as having wilderness characteristics. The inventory procedures call for the identification of supplemental values, however; the unit must meet the required criteria under size, naturalness, and solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities in order to be identified as a WSA.

* * *

DECISION

No new information was received through public comments that would warrant a change in the decision.

Although a portion of the unit is natural in character, it does not qualify as a Wilderness Study Area due to a lack of outstanding opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined recreation.

UPPER LITTLE OWYHEE RIVER
NV-01Q-102
ID-16-56a

The April 1981 proposed decision included the following evaluation of wilderness characteristics.

SIZE AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:

The unit contains a total of 57,589 acres of BLM land, with 53,280 acres in Nevada and 4,309 acres in Idaho. The unit is located approximately 95 miles northwest of Elko, Nevada.

The canyon of the Little Owyhee River trends northward through the unit. This canyon is joined by the drainages of Lake Creek and Willow Creek, both in Nevada. The rolling hills of Star Valley Ridge dominate the eastern portion of the unit. Big sagebrush and grasses dominate the vegetation in the unit.

NATURALNESS:

The unit generally appears natural because the nine small reservoirs and 18 miles of ways are not substantially noticeable in the unit as a whole. Fourteen miles of bladed fence lines are scattered throughout the unit. These fence lines are substantially unnoticeable in the unit as a whole, however, when in close proximity they are easily seen.

Except for the stateline bladed fence line, the Idaho portion of the unit lacks imprints of man.

SOLITUDE:

The unit is divided into two types of topographic regions:

- The canyon of the Little Owyhee River which is about 300 feet deep in the north portion of the unit. The canyon is typified by steep to moderate talus slopes and areas of large rock outcrops, pinnacles or isolated cliffs. There are several minor side drainages. The vegetation in the canyon is sagebrush-grass.

About a mile south of the Idaho-Nevada border, the canyon decreases in depth and the rock outcrops largely disappear until the canyon becomes only a shallow wash near the geographic center of the unit. There are over 15 miles of canyon or major washes within the unit.

- The flat to gently rolling sagebrush plateau. The eastern portion of the plateau is a gently rolling, hilly area dissected by shallow draws 50 to 100 feet deep. These draws drain northeast and southwest from a ridgeline known as Star Valley Ridge.

The western portion of the plateau is relatively flat with several low hills or buttes in the southwest portion.

The inventory determined that the topography of the unit would result in a concentration of visitors in a narrow corridor along the canyon of the Little Owyhee River.

In the northern portion of the unit, the relatively deep meandering character of the canyon would provide good topographic screening between visitor groups. However, throughout much of the southern portion of the unit, the Little Owyhee River is confined within a shallow, meandering wash. The wash provides little topographic screening.

The opportunities for solitude within the unit are limited because of the corridor effect and the lack of sufficient topographic screening. The sagebrush vegetation provides only limited screening; therefore, the opportunities for solitude are not outstanding.

PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED RECREATION:

Possible recreational activities within the unit include hiking, sightseeing, backpacking, camping, rock climbing, wildlife observation, horseback riding, and photography. However, the inventory determined that the unit lacks exceptional scenery and a diversity of landforms that would result in a strong recreational attraction for primitive recreation activities.

As stated in the solitude narrative, the unit consists of two topographic regions--the talus slope canyon and wash of the Little Owyhee River, and a flat to gently rolling plateau.

The Little Owyhee River Canyon in the northern portion of the unit is scenic but not exceptionally. The pattern of talus slopes and rock outcrops occur along the entire length of the canyon with little or no variation in form or color. The usual lack of water in the river adds to the lack of form and color variation. In the southern portion of the unit, the canyon becomes shallow, and eventually a dry wash. These portions of the river's course have little scenic quality.

The northern portion of the unit has good diversity in landform including canyons, deep to shallow draws and flat to gently rolling plateaus. However, in the majority of the unit the landform is mostly flat to rolling plateau.

The gentle topographic features enable a visitor to easily travel throughout the unit with little sense of confinement. However, there is little in the unit that would attract users.

Despite the unit's large size and the ease of travel within the unit, the lack of exceptionally scenic natural features and the lack of diversity in landform renders the opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation less than outstanding.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES:

The unit contains no known supplemental values.

* * *

Through more accurate methods of measurement, the total acreage of this unit was determined to be 57,693 acres, with 53,384 acres in Nevada and 4,309 acres in Idaho.

* * *

PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY:

Half of the comments received disagreed with the proposed decision; the remaining comments were equally divided among those agreeing with the proposal and those offering no opinion. The majority of comments provided information on wilderness characteristics.

Comments that agreed with the proposed decision indicated that scenery in the area was common.

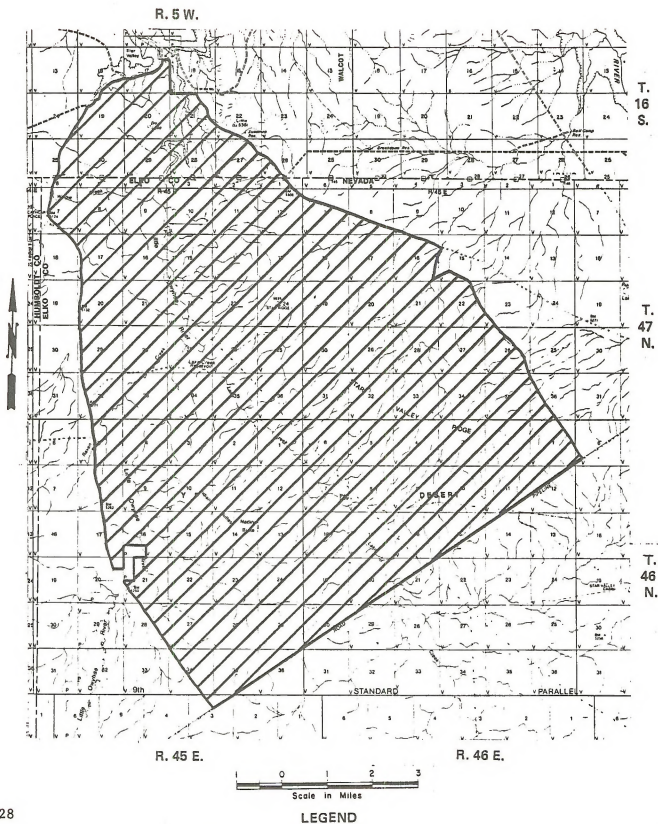
Comments that disagreed stated:

- The unit is a beautiful area with good recreation potential; and has high scenic quality and exceptional scenic value.
- The BLM neglected seasonal variation, and the relation to accessibility, when evaluating solitude and recreation potential.
- Use of the wording "corridor effect and the lack of sufficient topographic screening" is improper for determining the lack of outstanding solitude.
- Fifteen miles of canyons and major washes, along with rolling plateaus and shallow draws offer excellent topography, size, and ability to avoid others.
- The corridor effect may even be a beneficial factor, allowing better opportunities to avoid others outside the corridor.
- The diversity of landform in the unit assures further opportunity to avoid others.
- The Wilderness Act does not demand the opportunity to hide; it requires solitude, the opportunity to be alone. Any remote area offers this, including this unit.
- The BLM improperly evaluated the recreation opportunity, requiring it to be outstanding everywhere, rather than just somewhere in the unit.
- Portions of the unit are outstanding for recreation; BLM listed eight recreation opportunities, constituting the diversity requirement.
- Scenery and landform are not appropriate factors to disqualify the unit under the recreation criteria.

COMMENT ANALYSIS:

The comments that the unit is a beautiful area or had high scenic quality represent the opinions of the writers, with no supporting data. This opinion

UPPER LITTLE OWYHEE RIVER
NV-010-102
ID-16-56a



is not shared by the BLM, as evidenced by the fact that much of the unit had been given a Class C scenic quality ranking through the Bureau's Visual Resource Management Program.

Seasonal variation was considered in the evaluation of outstanding solitude and recreation.

The comments stated that the "corridor effect" and the lack of sufficient topographic screening should not have disqualified the unit as lacking in outstanding solitude opportunities. Visitor use will tend to concentrate around the most attractive features. This is especially true in desert canyon areas where the canyon is the main attraction and the primary physical feature controlling the flow of visitor use.

The corridor effect is only one of several factors used in determining opportunities for solitude. Corridors can be a beneficial factor in assuring solitude in a unit if it is a long corridor and/or readily escapeable. In this unit, the canyons and draws of the Little Ohwyee meet both of these conditions. The corridor effect was not the primary reason for eliminating the unit. Elimination was due to a combination of size, limited screening potential, and the corridor effect.

The rolling hills and washes in the unit provide screening and therefore solitude. The remoteness of the unit also contributes to solitude. However, the unit must provide solitude opportunities that are "outstanding" in order to meet the criteria. Size, configuration, topographic and vegetative screening, and the ability of the terrain features to allow visitors the opportunity to escape others utilizing the same area are the important factors in evaluating outstanding solitude. It is felt that the solitude opportunities in this unit are not outstanding.

The BLM did not improperly evaluate the recreation opportunity, as stated in the public comments. The proposed decision narrative did not indicate that recreation opportunities were outstanding in any portion of the unit.

A diversity of recreation opportunities does not make the opportunities outstanding. The BLM inventory procedures indicate that an outstanding determination may be made based on the outstanding quality of one opportunity or through the diversity in the number of activities possible in the unit. It does not state that diversity automatically means outstanding.

Determination of outstanding recreation opportunities is a subjective determination. Scenery and landform as they relate to specific recreation activities are appropriate factors in determining if the opportunities for those activities are outstanding.

* * *

DECISION:

No new information was received through public comment that would warrant a change in the decision.

Although the majority of the unit meets the naturalness criteria, it does not qualify as a Wilderness Study Area due to a lack of outstanding opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined recreation.

JARBIDGE ADDITION
ID-17-21

The April 1981 proposed decision included the following evaluation of wilderness characteristics.

SIZE AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:

The unit contains 5,881 acres of BLM land with land in both the States of Idaho and Nevada. The unit has a triangular configuration four miles by 3 1/2 miles at its widest point. The majority of the unit is in Nevada; however, the unit is administered entirely by Idaho BLM. The unit is contiguous to National Forest land which was determined to be non-wilderness during the RARE II process.

One small area of state land provides an irregular configuration to the west boundary of the unit. The state section is not serviced by a road, however, a way leads from the eastern boundary of the unit to the northeast corner of the state section.

NATURALNESS:

The inventory identified several imprints of man within the unit--3.5 miles of ways, two water developments along the eastern boundary road, and a garbage dump on the northern periphery of the unit.

The location, number, and distribution of these imprints of man, in combination with topographic and vegetative screening, make them substantially unnoticeable in the unit as a whole.

SOLITUDE:

The unit is divided into two types of topographic regions:

- The canyon of the East Fork of the Jarbidge River and the tributary canyon of Dave Creek. The East Fork is a steep-walled, gently curving canyon characterized by rock outcrops and steep talus slopes. Scattered stands of juniper, mahogany and aspen are found on the canyon floor and on some slopes. At the southern end of the unit the canyon drops as much as 1,000 feet below the surrounding plateau. The canyon of Dave Creek has 300-foot cliffs and talus slopes near its confluence with the East Fork of the Jarbidge River. South toward the headwaters of Dave Creek the slopes become less severe. Dense riparian vegetation is found adjacent to the stream channels in both canyons.
- The gently sloping sagebrush bench which is dissected by the East Fork of the Jarbidge River and Dave Creek. The bench slopes upward to the Jarbidge Mountains, which lie directly south of the unit. Vegetation is dominated by low-growing sagebrush and other northern desert shrub and grass species. In sheltered pockets aspen groves are frequently encountered. Native grasses are abundant.

The inventory determined that the topographic relief of the unit concentrates or channels visitors into short canyon sections and does not provide adequate screening of external influences or other visitor groups on the small sagebrush plateau areas.

The scenic character of the East Fork of the Jarbidge River would be the primary attraction for visitors to the unit. While dense riparian vegetation provides good screening, the short four-mile canyon and its relatively linear character increases the likelihood that visitors would frequently encounter each other. In the northern portion of the canyon, powerlines and the Murphy Hot Springs Road are frequently seen. Despite the screening of the riparian areas, the short length of canyons result in a negative corridor effect particularly in light of the difficulty of visitors to disperse onto surrounding plateaus because of steep canyon topography.

On the surrounding bench, topographic and vegetative screening is inadequate to shield visitors from each other. From numerous points on the sloping plateau it is possible to see most of the remainder of the unit. The sloping terrain and small size of the unit negate any vegetative screening potential the low growing sagebrush may have. Throughout the northern portion of the bench, external imprints of man are readily seen. Because of the lack of topographic features, these imprints are dominant features of the landscape.

The small size of the unit, combined with a general lack of topographic and vegetative screening, and the corridor effect in the short, linear canyon area render the opportunities for solitude less than outstanding.

PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED RECREATION:

The inventory determined that the difficult mobility in or out of the canyon, the unit's small size, the short section of scenic river canyon, and the visual impact of external influences of man combine to deny visitors a sense of unconfined recreation.

The short four-mile section of the East Fork of the Jarbidge River contains scenic and recreation attractions. However, this canyon is extremely short and mobility out the river canyon is difficult because of the steep topography.

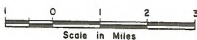
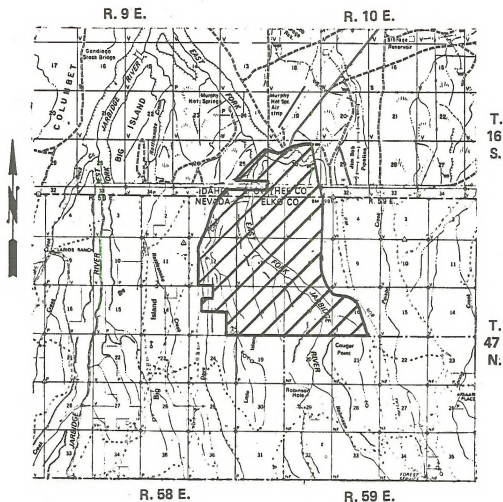
On the bench, the primary scenic attractions are vistas to the canyon below. Visitors along the canyon rim would also be aware of substantial external imprints of man in the near distance. Along many portions of the rim, steep cliffs prevent visitors from entering the canyon and effectively channel them along narrow rim areas.

Despite the scenic quality of the river canyon, the unit's small size, the number of external intrusions, and the corridor effect of the short length of canyon render opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation less than outstanding.



SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES:

The canyon of the East Fork of the Jarbidge River and vistas from the plateau are of exceptional scenic value. The unit has wildlife value as winter range for mule deer.

JARBIDGE ADDITION
ID-17-21



LEGEND

-  WILDERNESS STUDY AREA
-  AREA WITHOUT CHARACTERISTICS

PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY:

Comments received were equally divided among those who agreed with the proposed decision, those who disagreed, and those offering no opinion. Only one-half of the comments contained information on wilderness characteristics.

Comments that agreed with the evaluations as presented in the proposed decision stated the following:

- Scenery in the area is common.
- The unit meets the naturalness requirement.

Comments that disagreed with the proposed decision stated:

- The word "and" should not have been used in the description of the lack of outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation; "or," not "and," should have been used.
- "A general lack of topographic and vegetative screening" should not have been used to determine that the unit lacked outstanding solitude.
- The Wilderness Act does not demand the opportunity to hide; it requires solitude, the opportunity to be alone. Any remote area offers this, including this unit.
- The exceptional scenery, shown by the BLM as a supplemental value, indicates outstanding recreation opportunity.

COMMENT ANALYSIS:

The proposed decision contained the wording " . . . lack of outstanding opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined recreation." "And" was used in this sentence as a summation of the earlier sections on solitude and recreation. In those sections, it was clearly stated that neither opportunity exists in the unit; therefore, "and" is not incorrect wording in the summation paragraph.

" . . . a general lack of topographic and vegetative screening . . ." was used as part of the summary of the more detailed discussion of solitude in the three earlier paragraphs. Factors that are evaluated to determine solitude include size, configuration, topographic and vegetative screening, and the ability of visitors to avoid others in the unit. These additional factors were also described in the three paragraphs.

In desert canyon areas, the canyon is the main attraction, and the physical feature controlling the flow of visitor use. In this unit, the canyon does not have length, nor does it provide the ability for visitors to readily leave the canyon corridor and climb to the surrounding plateaus. A rigorous climb of the canyon would place visitors on a very small plateau, with limited screening. Visitors would also be confronted with the visual presence of powerlines, a road, and an airstrip. Because outstanding opportunities do not exist in either the canyon or on the plateaus, the unit lacks outstanding opportunities.

Remoteness alone does not guarantee outstanding opportunities, however, the amount of vegetation and topographic relief can contribute to a lack of outstanding opportunities. Visitors would have difficulty in being alone.

The fact that a supplemental value, such as scenic value exists in the unit, does not automatically make the associated sightseeing an outstanding recreation opportunity. Sightseeing within the unit would be a secondary recreational activity dependent upon backpacking, horseback riding, or river running. If the unit does not provide outstanding opportunity for these primary activities, the associated secondary activity cannot be outstanding.

* * *

DECISION:

No new information was received through public comments that would warrant a change in the decision.

Although the unit retains a natural appearance, it does not qualify as a Wilderness Study Area due to a lack of outstanding opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined recreation.

UPPER BRUNEAU RIVER
ID-17-19

The April 1981 proposed decision included the following evaluation of wilderness characteristics.

SIZE AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:

The unit contains 21,711 acres of BLM land and is located in both Idaho and Nevada. This acreage figure differs from the 22,797 acres used in earlier reports, due to a more accurate acreage calculation. The unit has a triangular configuration 11 miles long and up to seven miles wide. Approximately one half the unit is in Nevada; however, the unit is administered entirely by Idaho BLM.

Two cherry stem road systems penetrate into the west boundary of the unit; a total of 4.5 miles.

One state section is contained within the boundaries of the unit. This section is not serviced by a road; however, two ways connect the eastern side of the section with the unit's eastern boundary road.

A band of private land along the river canyon cuts well into the core of the unit to create a configuration problem in the southwest portion.

NATURALNESS:

The inventory identified 20 miles of ways, 2 1/2 miles of fence line, nine water developments (located on the western and southern boundaries), and one partially constructed livestock trail within the unit.

The southwestern land finger of the unit, almost segmented from the remainder of the unit by a corridor of private property, contains 2 1/2 miles of ways, and three water developments. Agriculturally developed land along the private corridor is visible from within the unit. The location, number, and distribution of these imprints of man make them substantially noticeable. A 3,650-acre parcel should be dropped from further consideration.

In the southeastern portion of the unit, a 2,350-acre parcel contains eight miles of ways, one mile of fence line, and a stock reservoir. The imprints of man are substantially noticeable in this portion and it should also be dropped from further consideration.

The location, number, and distribution of the remaining imprints of man, in combination with topographic and vegetative screening, make them substantially unnoticeable in 15,711 acres of the unit. None of the imprints of man are located within the major corridor of travel. Visual contact would be extremely localized because of a combination of topographic and vegetative screening.

SOLITUDE:

The unit is divided into two types of topographic regions:

- The canyon of the West Fork Bruneau River and the tributary canyon of Deep Creek. The West Fork Bruneau River contains a series of irregular benches leading to a vertical-walled canyon. The canyon's greatest depth within the unit is approximately 700 feet. The shallower tributary canyon of Deep Creek enters the Bruneau Canyon from the east and is four miles long. Scattered stands of juniper are found on slopes of the canyons. Willows, juniper, and other riparian vegetation occupy the canyon bottoms.
- The high sagebrush plateau which is dissected by the West Fork Bruneau River and Deep Creek. The plateau slopes gently upward to the south. In the extreme southern portion of the unit the plateau gives way to moderately steep foothills. Vegetation is dominated by low growing sagebrush and other northern desert shrub and grass species.

The inventory determined that topographic relief concentrates or channels visitors into short canyon sections and does not provide adequate screening of other visitors on the small sagebrush plateau areas.

The scenic character of the West Fork Bruneau River would be the primary attraction for visitors to the unit. The broken irregular benches and the meandering, vertical-walled canyon afford moderate to excellent topographic screening. However, the sheer canyon walls concentrate visitors along a narrow corridor and increase the potential for contact. The short amount of canyon (3 1/2 miles) in public ownership further increases the corridor effect. Despite the topographic screening and dense riparian vegetation, visitor contact would probably be frequent even with very limited use. In addition, the steep canyon topography would prevent visitors from dispersing onto the surrounding plateau. The short 3 1/2 miles of public land in the canyon is segmented into two separate shorter lengths by an intervening state section.

On the surrounding plateau, topographic and vegetative screening is inadequate to shield visitors from each other. The low shrub vegetation affords minimal vegetative screening. The sloping terrain and small size of the plateau sections negate any vegetative screening potential low growing sagebrush may have.

Because of the broken land ownership pattern and segmented short lengths of BLM-administered canyon, combined with the lack of adequate size and screening outside of the canyon, the opportunities for solitude in the unit are less than outstanding.

PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED RECREATION:

The inventory determined that the unit's size, the relatively short segmented section of BLM-administered river canyon, the limited mobility and dispersion into and out of the canyon, and the broken land ownership pattern combine to give visitors a sense of confinement.

The short sections of the West Fork Bruneau River contained in the unit provide a scenic and recreational attraction. The longer 2 1/4 mile section is isolated by the state section to the north and a narrow finger of private land jutting into the unit boundary from the south. Steep topography makes access to the canyon from the plateau very difficult. These short segmented sections of BLM-administered canyon are not sufficiently large to negate the sense of confinement created by topographic and land ownership barriers. The mixed ownership pattern in the West Fork Bruneau River Canyon is such that outstanding opportunities for recreation are negated.

On the surrounding plateaus, visitors would be congregated along the canyon rims where scenic vistas are best. Agricultural developments on private land are visible from many portions of the southern canyon rim. Along most of the rim, steep cliffs prevent visitors from entering the canyon and effectively channel them along narrow corridors.

Despite the scenic quality of the river canyon and recreation attractions within the canyon, opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation are not outstanding because of the strong negative corridor effect of the short length of canyon, broken land ownership patterns, and poor access to the canyon.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES:

The canyon of the West Fork Bruneau River and vistas from the plateau are of exceptional scenic value. The area has wildlife value as critical winter range for mule deer. Significant cultural resource values exist in the area.

* * *

PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY:

Comments received were about equally divided among those who agreed with the proposed decision, those who disagreed, and those offering no opinion. Just over one-half of the comments contained information on wilderness characteristics.

Comments that agreed with the evaluations as presented in the proposed decision indicated the following:

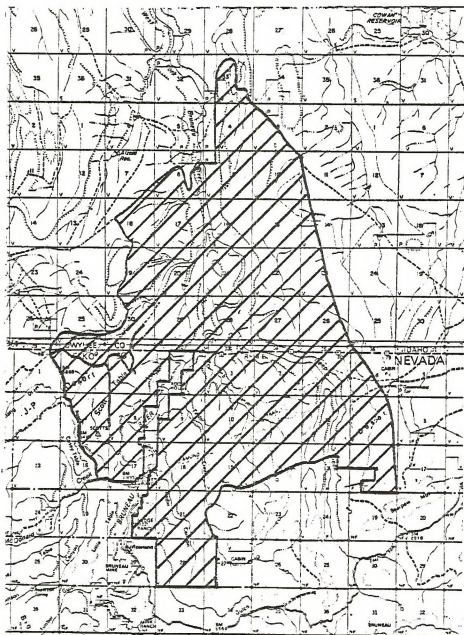
- Scenery in the area is common.
- The unit meets the naturalness requirement.

Comments that disagreed with the proposed decision stated:

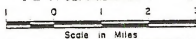
- The unit contains high scenic quality, and exceptional scenic value.
- The BLM should have considered seasonal variation, in relation to accessibility, when evaluating solitude and recreation.

UPPER BRUNEAU RIVER
ID-17-19



R. 7 E.



R. 66 E.



LEGEND

-  WILDERNESS STUDY AREA
-  AREA WITHOUT CHARACTERISTICS

- The word "and" in the description of the lack of outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation, should not have been used; "or" should have been used, not "and."
- "Lack of adequate size and screening outside the canyon" should not have been used to determine that the unit lacked outstanding solitude.
- The Wilderness Act does not demand the opportunity to hide; it requires solitude, the opportunity to be alone. Any remote area offers this, including this unit.
- The short and scenic canyon offers a diversity of landform, with the corridor effect of the canyon assuring the opportunity to avoid others who would flock to the canyon.
- Exceptional scenery, as listed under supplemental values, indicates one outstanding recreation activity.

COMMENT ANALYSIS:

The comment that the unit contained high scenic quality, and exceptional scenic value, expressed the opinion of the writer, with no supporting data. The BLM proposed decision did recognize the scenic character of the river, however, this factor alone does not make the unit meet the wilderness criteria.

Seasonal variation was considered in the evaluation of outstanding solitude and recreation.

The BLM recommendation contained the wording " . . . lack of outstanding opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined recreation." "And" was used in this sentence as a summation of the earlier sections on solitude and recreation. In those sections, it was clearly stated that neither opportunity exists in the unit; therefore, "and" is not incorrect wording in the summation paragraph.

The " . . . lack of adequate size and screening outside of the canyon . . ." was used in the recommendation as one of the factors, but not the only factor, in arriving at the conclusion that the solitude opportunities are not outstanding. Factors that are evaluated to determine solitude include size, configuration, topographic and vegetative screening, and the ability of visitors to avoid others in the unit. These additional factors were also described.

In desert canyon areas, the canyon is the main attraction, and the physical feature controlling the flow of visitor use. In this unit, the canyon does not have length, nor does it provide the ability for visitors to readily leave the canyon corridor and climb to the surrounding plateaus. A rigorous climb out of the canyon would place visitors on a very small plateau, with limited screening. Because outstanding opportunities do not exist in either the canyon or on the plateaus, the unit lacks outstanding opportunities.

Remoteness alone does not guarantee outstanding opportunities, however, the size of the unit and the amount of vegetation and topographic screening can contribute to a lack of outstanding opportunities. Visitors would have difficulty in being alone.

The fact that a supplemental value, such as scenic value, exists in the unit, does not automatically make the associated sightseeing an outstanding recreation opportunity. Sightseeing within the unit would be a secondary recreational activity dependent upon backpacking, horseback riding, or river running. If the unit does not provide outstanding opportunity for these primary activities, the associated secondary activity cannot be outstanding.

* * *

DECISION:

No new information was received through public comments that would warrant a change in the decision.

Although a portion of the unit meets the naturalness criteria, it does not qualify as a Wilderness Study Area due to a lack of outstanding opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined recreation.

SOUTH FORK Owyhee River
ID-16-53
NV-010-103A
NV-010-103

The April 1981 proposed decision included the following evaluation of wilderness characteristics.

SIZE AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:

The unit contains a total of 67,900 acres of BLM land with land in both Idaho (48,060 acres) and Nevada (19,840 acres). These acreage figures differ from those used earlier due to a more accurate calculation of acreage. The Nevada units were previously called "Devil's Corral." The unit has a rectangular configuration approximately 20 by 6 miles with a large southwest land finger.

Six cherry stem roads penetrate into the Idaho portion of the unit. In the Nevada portion a cherry stem road leaves the pipeline forming the southern boundary of the unit and parallels the western edge of the canyon rim for one mile. Adjacent to it another road parallels the canyon rim for five miles, terminating at a bladed fence line 3/4 miles north of the Nevada-Idaho border. The total mileage of cherry stem roads is 14 miles.

Identification of two low standard roads during the Nevada initial inventory isolated two subunits in the southwestern portion. The Idaho inventory confirmed the connection with these roads. The fence line system that forms the southwest boundary of the unit is 3/4 miles north of the state border. The larger subunit contains 3,100 acres in Idaho and 8,960 acres in Nevada (NV-010-103). The smaller subunit contains 900 acres in Idaho and 2,800 acres in Nevada for a total of 3,700 acres. This smaller subunit is bounded by roads to the east and west, a bladed fence line to the north, and a Southwest Gas Corporation pipeline to the south. It fails to meet the size criteria and should be dropped from further consideration.

In the Nevada portion of the unit a 700-acre triangular parcel is bounded by a road to the west, a bladed fence line to the north along the Nevada-Idaho stateline, and the gas pipeline to the southeast. This parcel should also be dropped since it does not meet the size criteria.

An additional low standard road was identified during the inventory in the northeast periphery of the unit. This road segments 650 acres which do not meet the size criteria.

Two state sections are within the boundaries of the unit. Neither are serviced by roads, however, a way from one of the cherry stem roads provides access to one of the state sections.

A 160-acre parcel of private land is in the canyon bottom at Coyote Hole. The private parcel is serviced by a short cherry stem road and is outside the boundary of the unit.

NATURALNESS:

The inventory identified eight miles of ways, five miles of fence line including the bladed fence line along the Nevada-Idaho border, five stock ponds, and a landing strip in the extreme northern end of the unit along along a short cherry stem road.

The landing strip adversely affects the naturalness of 400 acres in the northern end of the unit. Two ways, a bladed fence line, and a windmill form a 300-acre triangular parcel in the southeastern portion of the unit where the imprints of man are substantially noticeable. These two parcels should be eliminated as they do not meet the naturalness criteria.

The location, number, and distribution of the remaining imprints of man, in combination with topographic and vegetative screening, make them substantially unnoticeable in the unit as a whole.

SOLITUDE:

The unit is divided into two types of topographic regions:

- The canyon of the South Fork Owyhee River and its associated breaks. The canyon is typically narrow, meandering and bounded by sheer-walled cliffs or steep talus slopes. The steeper slopes occur in the northern downstream portion of the unit. Associated with the canyon are countless eroding rock pinnacles. The sheer walls rise as high as 700 feet above the river banks.
- The flat to moderately rolling sagebrush plateau which is bisected by the river. The northern portion of the plateau is lightly dissected by erosional channels which form the major side drainages of the river canyon. In the southern portion the terrain is flatter, and dissecting less prominent. Vegetation is sagebrush and northern desert plant communities.

The inventory determined that the rugged, meandering canyons, the 20 miles of river, and the large size of the unit provide excellent screening for visitor groups and excellent potential for dispersed use.

The canyon of the South Fork Owyhee River does concentrate visitors into a single major corridor thereby increasing the potential for visitor interaction. However, the length and meandering character of the canyon, screening by riparian vegetation, and constant rates of travel for river users lessen visitor contacts in the corridor. The meandering character of the canyon's walls, as well as the river bed and adjacent talus slopes, provide topographic screening between groups which may be travelling close together. The canyon walls and river bed are so tightly meandering that river level views up or down canyon are limited to less than 1/2 mile.

West of the canyon numerous draws provide access to and from the river. Since three draws terminate at cherry stem roads, they provide good opportunity for visitors to enter or leave the canyon, dispersing use

away from the river corridor. Access over the rimrock from the eastern and western plateau is also relatively easy in many areas.

The rolling sagebrush plateau provides good opportunities for solitude. In the northern portion the erosional channels create opportunities for topographic screening. On the southern plateau topography is insufficient to provide visual screening. Vegetation throughout the plateau is dominated by low growing sagebrush. Because of the sense of monotony generated by travel across open sagebrush flats, visitor use would concentrate along the rim of the South Fork Owyhee River where views are spectacular. However, the numerous drainages into the canyon and easy access over the rimrock in many areas would diminish the corridor effect by dispersing visitors into the canyon and away from the rim. The distance along the rim would be sufficient to allow low sagebrush vegetation to effectively screen visitor groups.

In the southern portion narrow configuration and proximity of the southwest boundary road make it likely that vehicular traffic would be visible from much of the plateau. Because of the lack of access points into or out of the canyon in this portion of the unit, visitor use would be concentrated in the canyon itself away from external influences.

The 12,060-acre subunit in the southwestern portion, paralleling the Idaho-Nevada border, does not offer outstanding opportunities for solitude. The area is very flat with no topographic variation. Vegetation is big sagebrush, two to three feet in height. The absence of topographic relief makes opportunities for solitude only good in this subunit because of the limited size.

Two narrow thumbs created by boundary roads and a state section on the eastern periphery of the unit should be eliminated from consideration because of their configuration. The combined acreage is 200 acres.

Because of the large size and configuration of the unit, the presence of topographic and vegetative screening in the major corridors of use, the ability of topography and the natural flow of the river to disperse or segregate visitor use, and the lack of external influences over most of the unit, the unit offers outstanding opportunities for solitude.

PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED RECREATION:

The inventory determined that the unit offers exceptionally scenic natural features and a diversity of topographic landforms which would provide a strong recreation attraction to those interested in backpacking, sightseeing, photography, wildlife viewing, fishing, hunting, horseback riding, and river running with kayak, canoe, or raft.

The South Fork Owyhee River canyon within the unit has three distinct topographic features. Sheer-walled, precipitous cliffs alternate with steep talus slopes. Supplementing the 700-foot vertical cliffs are countless basalt pinnacles in a myriad of different shapes.

In the northern portion of the unit the red rimrock, blue skies and flowing water create a colorful contrast to the upstream area where grays and greens dominate the landscape. The heavily eroded rock landscapes, steep talus slopes, and the dominance of subdued grays and greens all combine to heighten a sense of isolation. Traveling the river corridor the visitor is constantly aware of the forces of nature that have created the severely eroded landscape.

The high sheer walls of the canyon can give one a sense of confinement and restricted mobility. However, the number of miles of canyon and the natural movement of the river negate the confinement and restricted mobility caused by the canyon walls.

The talus lined draws on the western side of the canyon provide opportunities to escape the confinement of sheer walls. The slopes can be climbed to the rimrock. Mobility within the bottom of the canyon is enhanced by trails and the sparseness of heavy riparian vegetation.

Because travel across the sagebrush plateau would result in a sense of monotony, visitors in the plateau area would be concentrated in the vicinity of the canyon rim. The ease of mobility across the plateau provides numerous opportunities for spectacular vistas of the canyon. The lack of major tributaries and associated side canyons contribute to the ease of mobility for visitors travelling parallel to the river.

The challenge and excitement of whitewater rapids rated at Class I or II adds significantly to the recreational experience of the unit as a whole. Class II rapids provide the excitement of whitewater, but are suitable for boaters with experience, but only moderate levels of expertise.

The Nevada inventory determined that the small size, uniform character and lack of recreational attractions in the southwestern 12,060-acre subunit render it less than outstanding in recreation opportunities.

The two narrow thumbs eliminated because they lack opportunities for outstanding solitude also lack potential for outstanding recreation because of their corridor configuration.

Because of the diversity of natural features, the presence of exceptionally scenic natural features, the ease of mobility throughout the unit, and the number of miles of canyon in the unit, the unit offers outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES:

The area contains scenic, cultural and ecological values. Scenic features associated with the South Fork Owyhee River canyon have been described in the solitude and recreation portions. Archaeological resources have been found along the river. The unit is a year round habitat for mule deer and antelope and has been identified as important habitat for mountain

quail, a sensitive species. The unit is in an area that is being studied as a bighorn sheep release site.

* * *

Through more accurate methods of measurement, the total acreage of this unit was determined to be 68,721 acres, with 48,060 acres in Idaho, and 20,661 acres in Nevada.

PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY:

The majority of the comments received agreed with the proposed decision; the remaining comments were equally divided among those that disagreed, and those offering no opinion. The majority of comments provided information on wilderness characteristics.

Comments that agreed with the proposed decision stated:

- The unit contains outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive recreation.
- Excellent potential for backpacking, hiking, hunting, and horseback riding in the unit, as well as high scenic quality and value, and wildlife habitat.
- The main body of the unit was noted for its apparent naturalness as well as outstanding solitude and recreation opportunities.
- A hot spring possibly exists somewhere in the unit.

Comments that disagreed with the proposed decision or questioned the BLM's wording in the proposed decision stated the following:

- Scenery in the unit is common.
- For subunit 103, the BLM reevaluated characteristics due to a change in size. Without considering size, the opportunities for solitude and recreation are outstanding.
- The BLM neglected to discuss seasonal variation and the relation to accessibility in evaluating solitude and recreation.

COMMENT ANALYSIS:

The comment that scenery in the unit was common expressed the opinion of the writer, with no supporting data. This opinion is not shared by the BLM. The exceptionally scenic natural features contribute to the outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation in the unit.

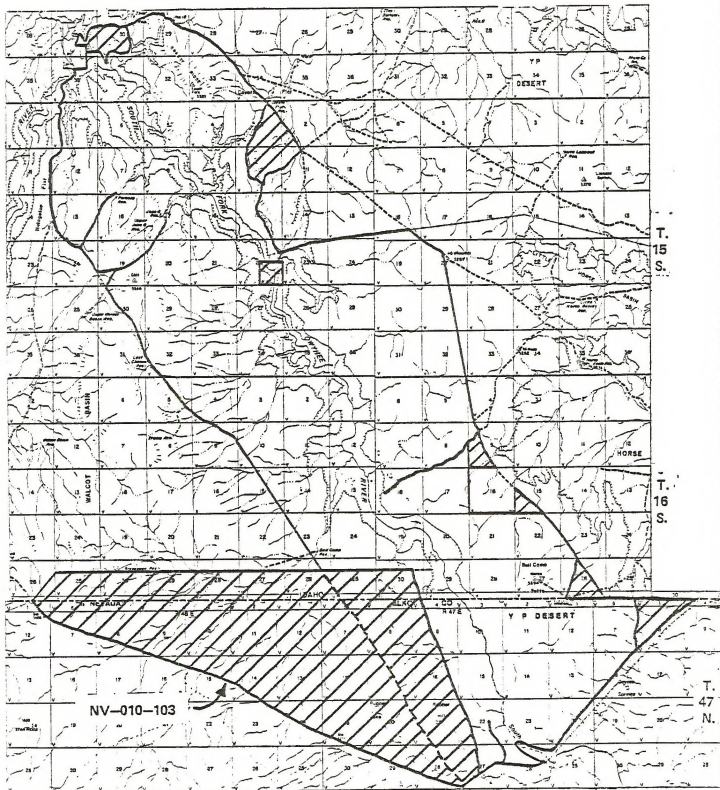
SOUTH FORK OWYHEE RIVER

ID-16-53

NV-010-103A

R. 4 W.

R. 3 W.



R. 46 E.

R. 47 E.

Scale in Miles
LEGEND



WILDERNESS STUDY AREA



AREA WITHOUT CHARACTERISTICS

Size of a unit is considered under several of the wilderness inventory criteria. However, if a unit or portion of a unit fails to meet the basic criteria of 5,000 acres or more, it is not necessary to evaluate the subunit further for naturalness or solitude-recreation.

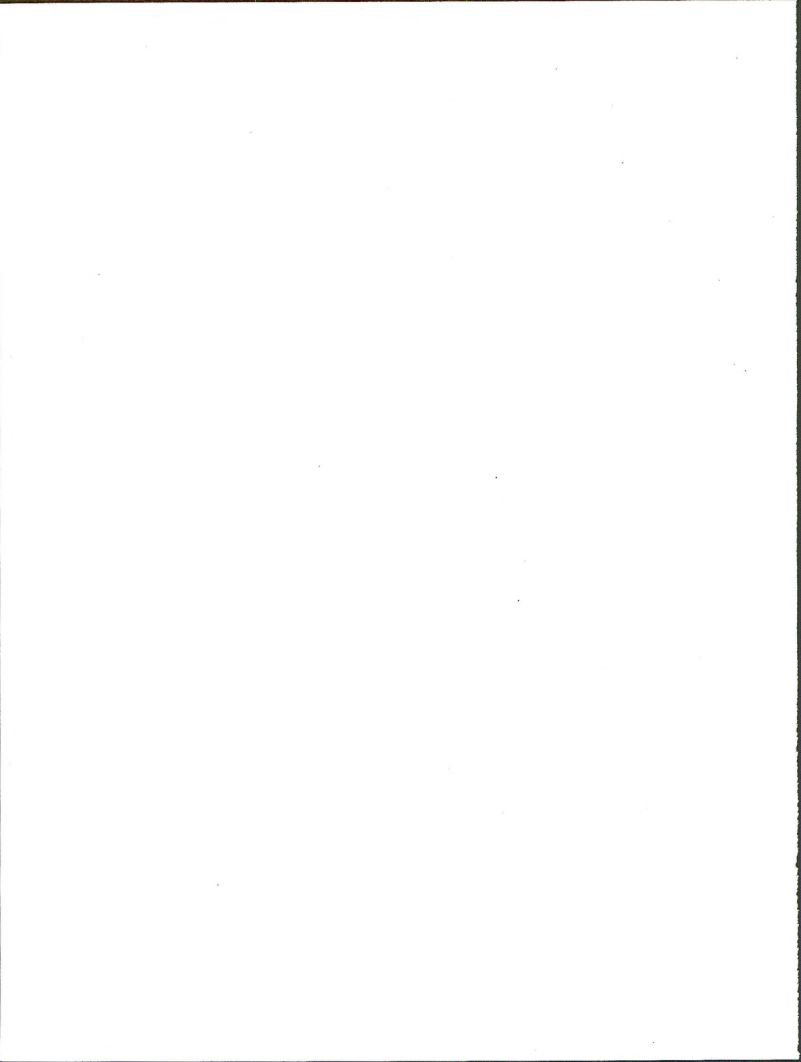
Seasonal variation was considered in the evaluation of outstanding solitude and recreation.

* * *

DECISION:

No new information was received through public comments that would warrant a change in the decision.

An area of 50,352 acres is identified as a Wilderness Study Area; the remaining 18,369 acres fail to meet either the size, the naturalness, or the solitude-recreation criteria. The WSA contains 42,510 acres in Idaho and 7,842 acres in Nevada.




NEVADA - IDAHO - UTAH

The following unit contains BLM lands in Nevada, Idaho, and Utah and is lacking in wilderness characteristics:

Little Goose Creek

NV-010-164
ID-22-1
UT-020-001



Nevada State Director

Idaho State Director

Utah State Director

LITTLE GOOSE CREEK
NV-010-164
ID-22-1
UT-020-001

The April 1981 proposed decision included the following evaluation of wilderness characteristics.

SIZE AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:

The unit contains a total of 11,350 acres of BLM land; 7,695 acres in Nevada, 2,325 acres in two parcels in Idaho, and 1,330 acres in Utah. The unit is about 90 miles northeast of Elko, Nevada. Topography consists of gentle rolling hills. Vegetation includes low-growing big sagebrush with scattered juniper and pinyon pine at higher elevations.

NATURALNESS:

Within the unit are some 15 miles of two track ways and approximately six miles of fenceline. These imprints of man are substantially unnoticeable in the unit as a whole and do not detract from the apparent naturalness.

SOLITUDE:

The topography is rolling, but not diverse. The highest point in the unit (in the western portion of the Nevada acreage) is 6,375 feet. The majority of the unit varies from 5,200 feet to 5,600 feet. The rolling hills provide only moderate screening. The low-growing sagebrush provides poor vegetative screening. Juniper are scattered, thus providing only moderate screening. The unit does not offer opportunities for solitude that could be considered outstanding.

PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED RECREATION:

Potential recreation activities include hunting, hiking, camping, horseback riding, rockhounding, and photography. No real challenging terrain is available for hiking. Horseback riding and hiking would be limited in duration due to the unit's small size. Deer hunting could be considered good. Rockhounding is considered average in the unit. The unit does not offer opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation that could be considered outstanding.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES:

The only known supplemental value is habitat for two sensitive species - the western burrowing owl and ferruginous hawk.

* * *

Through more accurate methods of measurement, the total acreage of this unit was determined to be 11,931 acres, with 8,276 acres in Nevada, 2,325 acres in Idaho, and 1,330 acres in Utah.

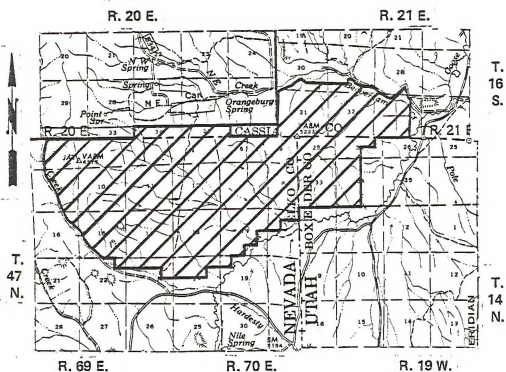
* * *

LITTLE GOOSE CREEK



NV-010-164

ID-22-1

UT-020-001



LEGEND

-  WILDERNESS STUDY AREA
-  AREA WITHOUT CHARACTERISTICS

PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY:

Comments received were equally divided among those who agreed with the proposed decision, those who disagreed, and those offering no opinion. One-half of the comments contained information on wilderness characteristics.

Comments that agreed with the proposed decision indicated that scenery in the area was common.

Comments that disagreed stated the following:

- The area contains high scenic quality and exceptional scenic values.
- The BLM neglected seasonal variation, in relation to accessibility, in evaluating solitude and recreation.
- The word "and" should not have been used in the description of the lack of outstanding opportunities for solitude and for primitive recreation; "or," not "and" should have been used.
- "Only moderate screening" should not have been used to determine that the unit lacked solitude.
- The Wilderness Act does not demand the opportunity to hide; it requires solitude, the opportunity to be alone. Any remote area offers this, including this unit.

COMMENT ANALYSIS:

The comment that the unit contains high scenic quality and exceptional scenic values, expressed the opinion of the writer, with no supporting data; this opinion is not shared by the BLM.

Seasonal variation was considered in the evaluation of outstanding solitude and recreation opportunities.

In the BLM recommendation it was stated " . . . lacks opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined recreation." "And" was used in this sentence as a summation of the earlier sections on solitude and recreation. In those sections it was clearly stated that neither opportunity exists in the unit. Therefore, "and" is not incorrect wording in the summation paragraph.

"Only moderate screening" was used in the recommendation in relation to the scattered juniper and to the rolling hills in the unit. This factor was one of, but not the only factor, used in arriving at the conclusion that the solitude opportunities are not outstanding. Remoteness alone does not guarantee the opportunities to be outstanding, however, extent of vegetation and the amount of topographic relief can contribute to a lack of outstanding opportunities. Visitors would find difficulty in being alone, if others were in the unit at the same time.

* * *

DECISION:

No new information was received through public comment that would warrant a change in the decision.

Although the unit is natural in character, it does not qualify as a Wilderness Study Area because it lacks outstanding opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined recreation.

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